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Praise of Penn.



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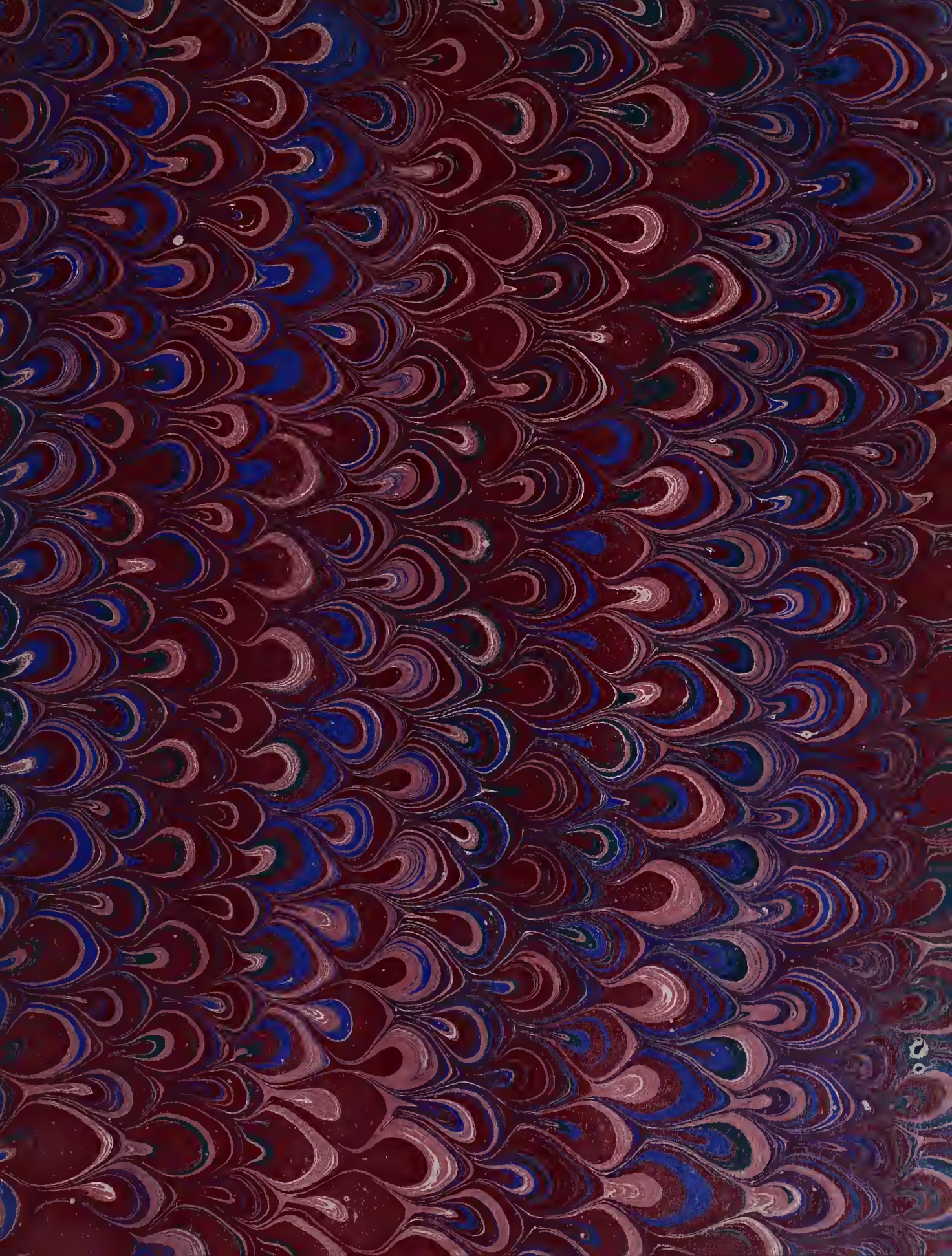
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VOLUME



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ENAGISMA.

BY

LOUIS F. BENSON.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRIVATELY PRINTED.
1881.



FIFTY COPIES PRINTED.

NUMBER

44

COLLINS, PRINTER.

I. DEDICATION.

THIS simple offering that I may not send
 To whom I would, with love I consecrate,
 And, on her altar laid, I dedicate
These verses to the memory of my friend.
Time wrote them on my heart, and I but lend
 A voice to sing them, while beyond my sight
 He somewhere waits till time "The end"
 shall write
Beneath my verses, and restore my friend.

Time wrote them in the twilight that must be
 In this, our lasting friendship's wayside inn,
 Since God so suddenly put out the light
That showed the features of his face to me,
 And took His wondering boy away with Him,
 Ere he had time to bid me a Good-night.

10th February, 1881.

II. MEMORIES.

How sweetly through the silence that is left,
When voices we have loved are still,
Comes to the heart a sympathizing guest
Who can its vacant places fill:

How memory brings the joys of other days
To calm and soothe the present pain;
And walks beside us in deserted ways,
Whereon our friend comes not again.

And while I sit in the familiar room,
Before his desk, among his books,
There falls on me a strangeness and a gloom,
So sad, so desolate it looks;

So full of purpose utterly undone,
 And pages that are half unfilled;
Like faded wreaths of victories not won,
 And consummations only willed :

Until some memory, with cunning hand,
 Doth lift the darkness and the pall;
And thoughts of something he has said or planned
 Make sunny pictures on the wall;

Suggesting that his life has found no end
 Beyond the shadow and the pain;
And the remembered features of my friend
 Look kindly down and smile again.

The heart is cheered, and gladly contemplates
 The finished work that he has done,
While faith looks up to him, and patience waits
 To gain the summit he has won.

So, from the broken friendship that has been,
 The paths to that which shall be, slope;
And the long loneliness that lies between
 Is bridged by memory and hope.

III. LONELINESS.

I HEARD a plaintive sound among the trees,
A breath of murmured music, and a throb,
That, if it had been human, were a sob,
And died away in sighings on the breeze.
Then in my heart I said : "Within this wood
There is a sympathy : kind nature weaves
About my grief a coronal of leaves,
And binds it with a song of saddest mood."

Ah, no! It is the soul alone that grieves,
And never yet our sorrows wrung a sigh
From nature, but our fancy woke to find
We heard but rhythmic rustlings of the leaves,
That flap and twist and bend unpitifully
Beneath the pulseless fingers of the wind.

IV. HOPE.

It comes again, the second anniversary
Of a dark day of pain,
Yet not a dreaded guest, who brings a curse to me,
The season comes again.

It freshens all the happy recollections
I cherish of my friend,
And paints anew, at memory's suggestions,
The scenes about the end ;

And how I stood among the broken hearted
This day two years ago,
While the still form from which his soul had
parted
Was laid beneath the snow.

A cold wind swept that hill beside the river,
Where every tree was bare
Against the wintry sky, that sent no glimmer
Nor gleam of sunlight there.

And when were said the words of benediction,
We were about to part ;
With the new burden of our great affliction
Pressed close to every heart:—

Then through the clouds, like flowers of heavenly
blooming,
The lights of sunset came,
And on that grave the evening air illumined
Strewed blossoms bright as flame.

From hill to hill the golden glory brightened,
And on the stream between ;
Till every heart went comforted and lightened
From the transfigured scene.

For faith had found the Love that bided tryst
there;

And still I hear to-night,
The quivering accents of a broken whisper,
“Beyond the river—Light.”

Oh, faith sublime! dream of the weary hearted,
I mount her golden stairs;
And, with a message from my friend departed,
Hope meets me unawares.

Glad messenger, come down from the immortal
With willing feet to me,
My own were resolute to gain the portal
Could I but climb with thee.

O vision blest, the pilgrim soul attending;
And wilt thou lead him home?
Thou beckonest to me, as thou art ascending,
To follow thee—I come:

I come, I come; and when my feet are weary,
 Then whisper, bending o'er,
That every step is lifting my heart nearer
 The loved, who climbed before.

V. THE UNCHANGEABLE.

How beautiful the thought to one who stands
 Encircled by a tidal-flow of change,
 Whose billows, with a murmur sad and
 strange,
Break ceaselessly about him on the sands ;
While chilly-burdened winds encompassing
 The shore, make monody of days that were,
 With prophecies of all unrest, and stir
His soul with longing for some steadfast thing :—

How beautiful to him the thought of God,
 Who, farther back than cycle-reach, was
 Love,
 And shall be, when the cycles die again,
Still Love, unchangeable: a shore so broad,
 So firm, beyond all tides, all storms above,
 A rock 'gainst which time-billows dash
 in vain.

THE PRAISE OF PENN

1882

BY

LOUIS F. BENSON

COLLINS, PRINTER.

THE PRAISE OF PENN

Not with the trumpet blast of martial song,
 The noisy minstrelsy
And plaudits that to conquerors belong,
 The praise of Penn should be :
But rather in the simple words men use
 In fellowship and love,
Or chastened spirits utter, wont to muse
 On things that are above.

I think he won his manhood valiantly
 On faith's old battle-ground ;
I think that like the garb of royalty
 He wore it, and was crowned.

THE PRAISE OF PENN

And if on royal brows that crown be best
By right divine that cling,
Surely of sovereigns, the kingliest
Was our own Quaker king.

And yet he came not as a conqueror,
With fire-brand and sword,
More mindful to establish on this shore
The kingdom of the Lord ;
To found a commonwealth that he might bless,
And wherein war should cease,
A land whose ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all whose paths are peace.

The woods unfurled to the October air,
Pennons of gold and flame,
When, sailing up the river Delaware,
The good ship Welcome came ;
And all who dwelt upon its fertile banks,
Dutch, Swedes, and Englishmen,

THE PRAISE OF PENN

Gave salutation, unto God their thanks,
And their right hands to Penn.

Two hundred times upon the Delaware,
The autumn leaves, since then,
Have drifted seaward ; and the dwellers there
Who gave their hands to Penn
Long since are mingled with the leaves. No more
The Welcome sails the sea,
Forever harbored by the sheltered shore
Of the heart's loyalty.

Yet now, two hundred autumns afterward,
The woods in red and gold,
And, stately as its founder's dream restored,
The city he foretold,
The broad fields stretching outward to the sea
Along the river-shore,
Wait at the portals of a century
To welcome Penn once more.

THE PRAISE OF PENN

And what of thee? O woodland commonwealth,
 O commonwealth of Penn,
That art no more a woodland, but a breadth
 Of empire. Standing then
In woods unbroken to the northern lake,
 Thy forest trees; so all
Thy sons, as many, stand, who for thy sake
 Like forest trees would fall.

Thou, from thy reverend altitude of years,
 With hand uplifted now,
Dost bind two woven centuries of praise
 About thy founder's brow:
While loyal millions, loving him and thee,
 Pledge in their hearts' red wine
Two names, made one in holy unity
 Forever—his and thine.

Not with the trumpet blast of martial song,
 The noisy minstrelsy

THE PRAISE OF PENN

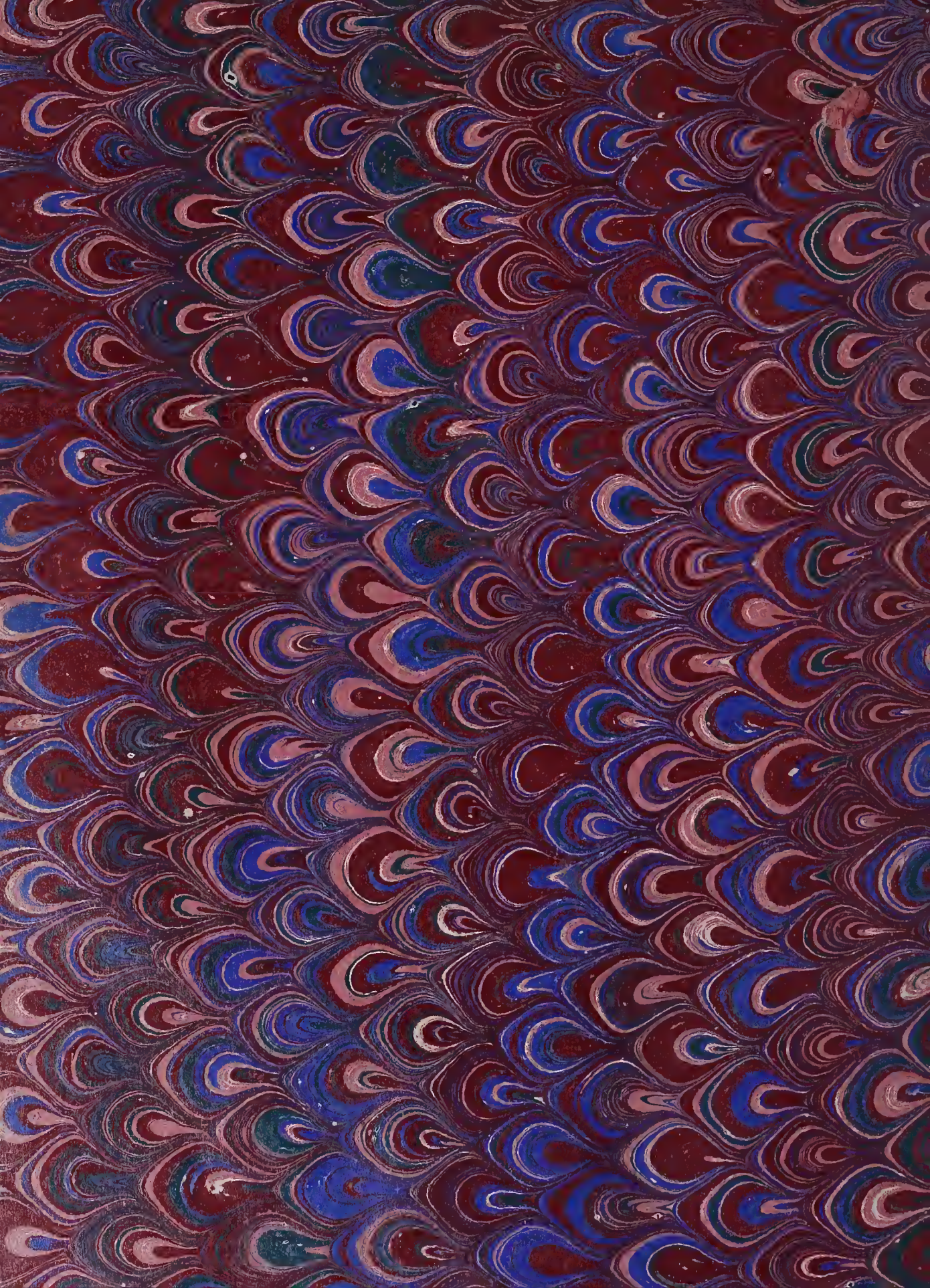
And plaudits that to conquerors belong,
The praise of Penn should be :
But rather in our watchfulness for thee,
O queenly State, our prayer
That civil peace and the soul's liberty
May dwell immortal there.

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